

STATE OF MAINE
PACKAGE/ENVELOPE HANDLING GUIDANCE
PUBLIC SAFETY RESPONSE
Issued by the Maine Emergency Management Agency
(Revised December 21, 2005)

The local Incident Commander, in coordination with the appropriate law enforcement agency, is responsible for the following procedures. **Law enforcement agencies shall treat the materials as potential evidence of a crime.**

Step 1 – Initial Response

Is the package suspected of containing an explosive device? If so, leave area and contact the State Police Bomb Squad. Otherwise, proceed as follows:

1. Has package been opened yet? If not, do not open. Are contents visible?
2. Secure area and isolate package.
3. Shut down HVAC and isolate immediate area.
4. Evacuate surrounding vicinity and close room.
5. Have everyone who contacted material wash hands with soap and water, blow their nose and wash hands again.
6. Record names, addresses and telephone numbers of persons who handled package or were in immediate area.
7. Interview persons for credibility.

Step 2 – Threat Assessment

1. Is package from a known source? If so, check that source.
2. Is it addressed to a known entity or person? If so, contact them.
3. Are involved persons credible?
4. Is package accompanied by a threat or are there circumstances that might prompt a threat?
5. Does the package look suspicious?
6. Do not smell it yourself, but did anyone report an unusual smell or odor?
7. Have any persons been exposed through contact or inhalation?
8. Is anyone isolated or quarantined?
9. Is anyone experiencing physical effects requiring medical attention?
10. The Weapons of Mass Destruction: Civil Support Team may be able to assist you in making this assessment. You can contact them by calling the State Police at 1-800-452-4664.

On the basis of the assessment, determine if the incident should be treated as a high priority. If the answer is yes, notify the State Police at **1-800-452-4664**. The State Police will contact MEMA, or during off-hours the MEMA Duty Officer, to notify them of the event and provide a point of contact for follow-up. MEMA will contact the appropriate County EMA Office and the Bureau of Health. Refer to the Guidelines for Sample Collection Requirements on Page 2.

If package is not open and the threat assessment is negative, the following actions should apply:

1. Photograph as found.
2. Wearing gloves and particulate mask, move package to isolated, controlled, ventilated area, not near HVAC intake, open and examine contents. Discard gloves in sealed biohazard bag.
3. If there is no reason to suspect a threat, package can be bagged and discarded as trash or handled routinely. Washing precautions are still prudent.

If the threat assessment is negative, but there is a need to test substance or if instructed by the CST contact, follow the Guidelines for Sample Collection.

Step 3 – After Testing

- ➔ Testing will be accomplished and the results relayed to the appropriate law enforcement agency, MEMA and County EMA Office.
- ➔ If test is negative, the appropriate law enforcement agency should investigate the threat according to normal procedure including Crime Lab analysis for fingerprints and DNA. Note: The Crime Lab will not handle evidence until it has been cleared by the Public Health Lab.
- ➔ If investigative assistance or information is needed at any point, the local law enforcement agency can contact the Regional Maine State Police Criminal Investigation Unit for assistance or guidance.

Additional Information:

Anthrax: Testing and treatment for Anthrax is NOT indicated at the time of exposure and should NOT be initiated unless tests show the package may contain Anthrax.

Ricin: Powdered Ricin has similar physical characteristics to Anthrax. In a case of suspected Ricin, use Anthrax protocols.

Guidelines for Sample Collection Requirements

- ➔ Photograph package as found.
- ➔ Have everyone coming in contact with it thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water and blow their nose, washing their hands again.
- ➔ Samples should be collected by either the CST or HazMat trained responders. If the SCT or HazMat responders are not available and it is determined that a sample must be collected, then use plastic/rubber gloves and a particulate mask. These must be discarded in a biohazard bag after use.
- ➔ Samples must be packaged in three layers with the outer most layer rigid. Sample packages must be as small as possible. A clean 1 gallon paint can is an ideal container and approximates the maximum acceptable size. If possible, the outside surface should be decontaminated.
- ➔ Label properly including the name of the person packaging the material and the date, time of doing it and initial the sealed container.
- ➔ Record the names of all persons, their addresses and phone numbers who physically handled the package or who were in the immediate vicinity. Interview involved persons for credibility.
- ➔ Contact the Maine State Police at 1-800-452-4664, to advise a package is being delivered to Augusta and obtain a control number for it.
- ➔ The appropriate law enforcement agency is responsible for the delivery of the suspect package to Augusta in a sealed container stored in the trunk of a car.
- ➔ The package must be delivered to the Bureau of Health's Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory, 221 State Street, Augusta, during normal business hours, or contact Capitol Security (287-4357) to coordinate the receipt of materials outside business hours. Complete evidence form with Lab or Capitol Security to maintain chain of custody.

Note: For health, safety and security the laboratory cannot accept samples under the following conditions:

1. **Samples in a container larger than 1 gallon in size. Larger samples cannot be safely examined in a biological or chemical safety cabinet. This may require the taking of a sample instead of sending a large package.**

2. **An unopened suspicious package/envelope that has not been screened for chemical or radiological contamination and explosive device.**